

# **ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME IN VIRGINIA**

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## ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME IN VIRGINIA

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# **ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME IN VIRGINIA**

## **PREFACE**

This section presents data to illustrate the youth involved in Virginia's juvenile justice system. It is divided into parts containing data about juvenile arrests, intake cases, admissions to secure detention facilities, and commitments to juvenile correctional centers. The most recent available information is presented and that is usually to 2005.

Since the change from uniform crime reporting to the incident-based reporting system, the arrest data have been problematic. A limited amount of arrest data is provided. Further details are provided in the arrest section.

Information is collected from several sources. Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) collects data on juveniles handled by local court service units, juveniles held in secure detention facilities, and juveniles committed to juvenile correctional centers. Juvenile population data were obtained from the web site of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention<sup>1</sup>.

## **1: ARREST DATA**

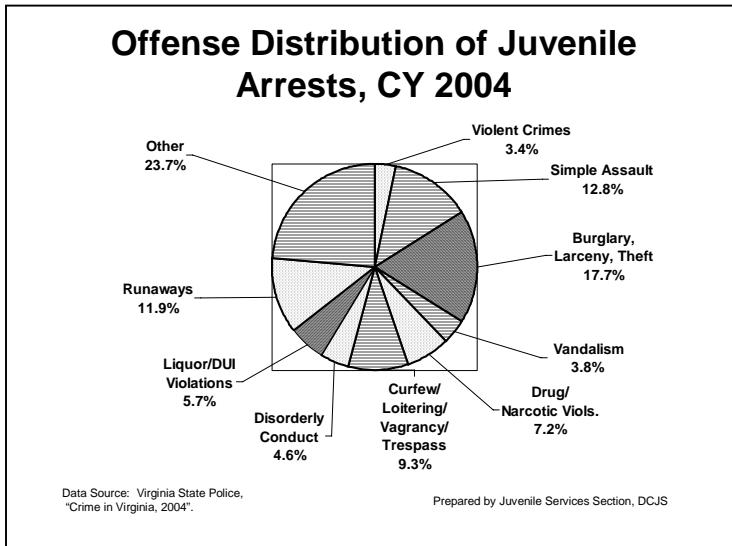
Arrest data are obtained from the Virginia Department of State Police. Since the change from the uniform crime reporting system to incident-based reporting, the arrest data have been problematic. In Virginia, 1999 was the first year to use the IBR system. That year, data for a large, but unknown, number of localities, including many large cities, was incomplete or entirely missing. In 2000, localities representing about one-quarter of the Virginia population reported no data or incomplete data. Arrest data have improved but, as of calendar year 2004, data for 28 Virginia localities was incomplete or missing, including the City of Alexandria.

In this section, general information about the distribution of offenses and the age distribution of offenders for calendar year 2004 is reported. The assumption is made that the missing data have the same characteristics as that reported. Arrest data are not available from the Virginia State Police for juveniles by race.

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<sup>1</sup> Juvenile population data are available online for the State and individual localities at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/ezapop/default.asp>.

## OFFENSE TYPE

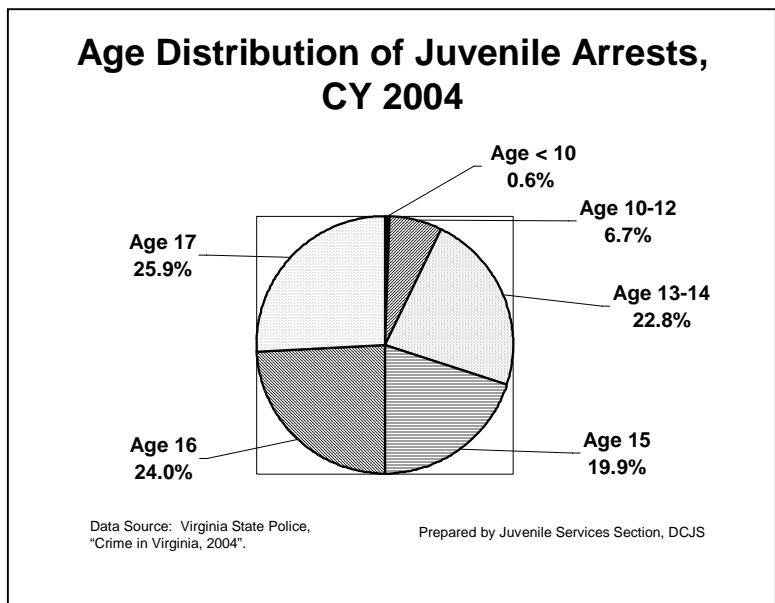


The offense distribution of juvenile arrests for calendar year 2004 is shown in the graph. These are the most recent data available. The distribution has changed little since the presentation of 2001 data in the 2003 Three-Year Plan. As the graph shows, violent crimes represent a small portion of juvenile arrests -- about 3.4%, unchanged from 2002 and 2003. The only offense groups that show changes of more than 10% are vandalism with an increase of

10.6% from 1251 to 1384; disorderly conduct with an increase of 26.5% from 1,342 to 1,697; and runaways with an increase of 11.6% from 3,943 to 4,400.

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of juvenile arrests is shown in the graph. There is little change since 2001. As the graph shows, about 30% of children arrested are aged 14 and under.



## SUMMARY: ARREST DATA

Arrests for violent crimes represented about 3% of juvenile arrests in 1998. That percentage has remained stable. The age distribution is also relatively unchanged since 1998. In 1998, children aged 14 and under represented 30.4% of arrests; in 2004 they represented 30.1%.

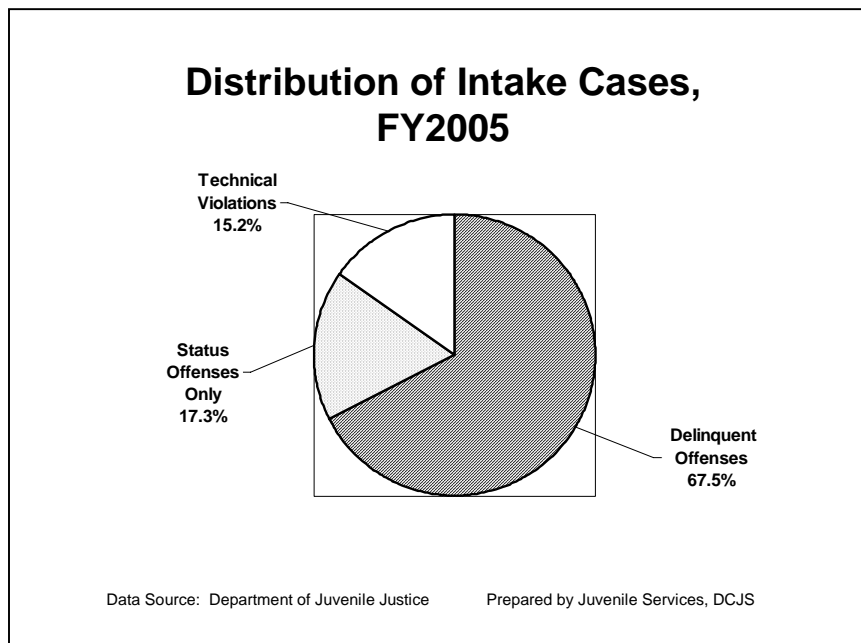
## 2: INTAKE DATA

### TOTAL CASES, PETITIONED, AND DIVERTED CASES

Juveniles are brought to the attention of intake officers at Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Units by police and by parents, victims, and other agencies. The Court Service Units receive, review, and process complaints, determine whether a petition should be filed with the court, establish whether to release or detain youth, and provide services to youth and families.

### COURT SERVICE UNIT INTAKE CASES

The information presented in this section concerns juvenile intake cases. They include cases where the most serious offense is a delinquent offense, cases of technical violations, and cases where the only offense is a status offense. As the graph shows, delinquent cases represent about two-thirds of intake cases (42,666). The largest offense categories for delinquent cases are assault,



narcotics violations, and larceny; they are depicted graphically later in this section.

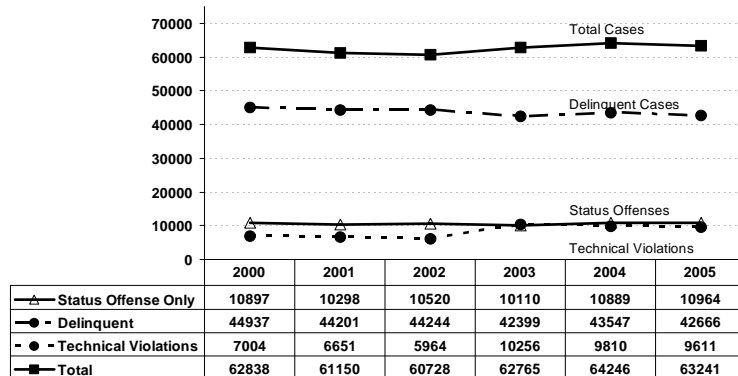
The other one-third of cases is status offenses and technical violations. Cases with only status offenses represent a little over 1/6 of intake cases (10,964). These are mainly truants, runaways,

and children in need of services.

Technical violations represent a little less than 1/6 (9,611). These are cases where no new offense has been committed and are mainly probation/parole violations and contempt of court cases.

The number and distribution of cases has been relatively stable since 2000, as depicted on the graph. The total, in the top line, ranges from about 61,000 to 64,000. Delinquent cases, shown in the next line, are 42,000 to 44,000. Cases with only status offenses and cases where the most serious offense is a technical violation are represented in the bottom two lines.

### Number of Juveniles Brought to Court Service Unit Intake by Most Serious Offense, 2000-2005



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

Cases with only status offenses are consistently 10,000 to 11,000. Cases where the most serious offense is a technical violation are more variable from year to year.

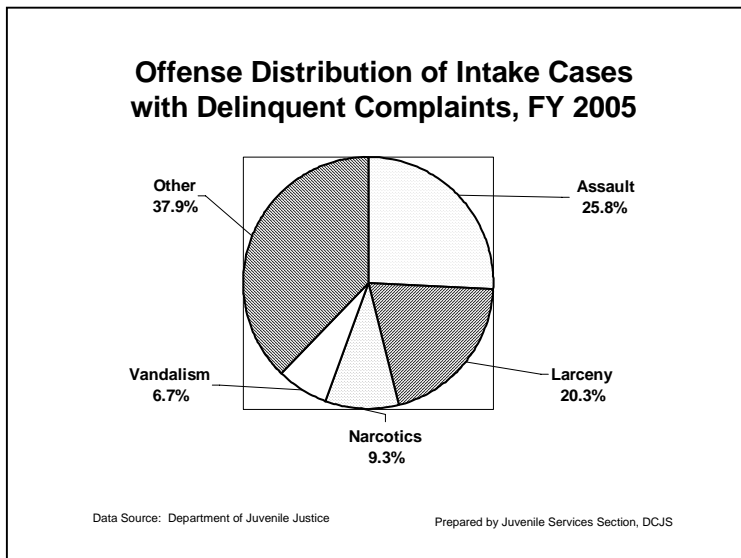
Data are provided for total, petitioned, and diverted cases. This is just the second year we have presented data on cases that are diverted, so trend data on diverted cases are not available. Petitioned and diverted cases do not add to 100% of intake cases as some cases are handled in other ways such as returned to probation supervision, considered an unfounded complaint, returned to out-of-state, or a consent agreement signed.

## COURT SERVICE UNIT INTAKE - DELINQUENT CASES

Delinquent cases are those for which a child is brought to intake for a complaint that is a felony or a misdemeanor 1-4. These would be criminal offenses if committed by adults. They range from minor offenses such as shoplifting to major offenses such as murder and manslaughter. Most are misdemeanor offenses. Of the felony offenses, most are property offenses rather than crimes against persons. Cases classified as delinquent may have other complaints against the child such as status offenses, technical violations, domestic relations, or traffic, but the most serious complaint is for a delinquent offense.

Total data are presented, along with information about the offenses committed, percentages of cases petitioned and diverted, and demographic information regarding age, race and gender. For delinquent cases, 5.1% are not accounted for as being petitioned or diverted. As noted above, this indicates that they were handled in some other way.

## Largest Delinquent Offense Categories



In 2005, the same four offenses as in 2003 and 2004 accounted for almost 2/3 of the delinquent cases. These data do not include cases of technical violations or cases where the only offense is a status offense. They were assault (11,000 cases compared to 10,500 in 2002), larceny (8,700 cases compared to 8,400 in 2002), narcotics (4,000 cases compared to 4,000 in 2002), and vandalism

(2,800 cases compared to 2,800 in 2002).

Overall, about three-fourths (73.2%) of cases brought to court service units for delinquent offenses are petitioned to court. This is unchanged since the last Update. As would be expected, higher percentages of cases with more serious offenses are petitioned.

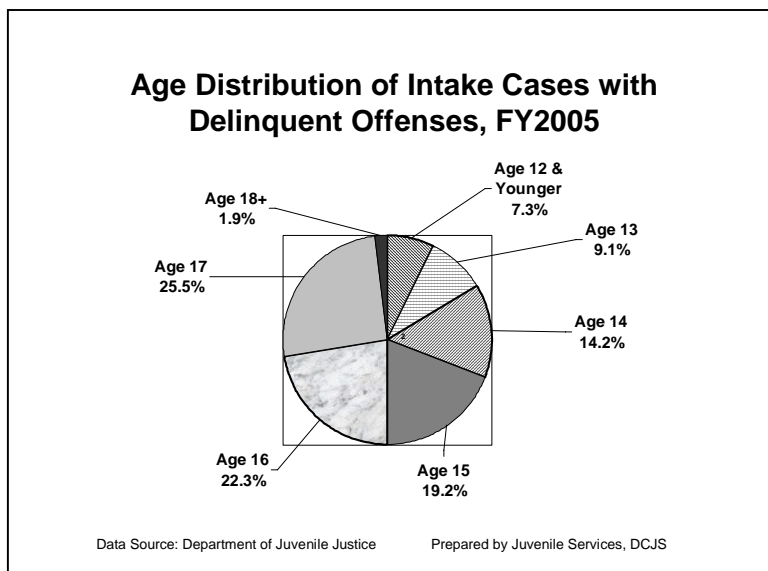
About 22% (21.8%) of intake delinquent cases are diverted. In 2005, there were 9,282 cases diverted. Less serious offenses are more likely to be diverted. Thus, approximately one-third of abusive language, disorderly conduct and larceny cases are diverted but less than 10% of burglaries and robberies, and 14% of weapons offenses are diverted.

## Demographics on Cases - Most Serious Offense is a Delinquent Offense

This section contains data about the age, racial composition, and gender of intake cases where the most serious offense is a delinquent offense.

### **Age**

As the chart shows, almost one-third of children brought to intake for delinquent offenses are aged 14 and



younger. About 1 in 6 is aged 13 or under. The numbers and percentages are essentially unchanged since 2003 and 2004. As in 2003 and 2004, young juvenile offenders represent a disproportionately large percentage of children brought to intake for arson and sex offenses.

Young children are less likely to be petitioned to court and more likely to be diverted. In FY2005, overall, 73% of cases were petitioned to court, but 39% of cases aged 7-10 were petitioned, 51% of those aged 11, 60% of those aged 12, and 69% of those aged 13.

Conversely, children aged 13 and under are more likely to be diverted. In 2005, overall, 22% of cases were diverted, but 57% of cases aged 7 to 10, 45% of cases aged 11, 37% of cases aged 12, and 29% of cases aged 13 were diverted.

### **Racial and Gender Composition – Delinquent Intake Cases**

African American juveniles are over-represented at intake relative to their proportions in the population. In 2005, 47% of children brought to intake for delinquency were African American. This has increased somewhat. In the period 1998 to 2002, the percentage of African Americans brought to intake was 44%; in 2004, it was 45%, and in 2005, it was 47%. It is too early to determine if the increase is an upward trend. The gender composition has changed less than 1% since 2000.

As indicated in the last Three-Year Plan, the data indicate that, although African American juveniles are disproportionately represented at intake, overrepresentation is not increased at the petitioning stage. This is unchanged over the past eight years. The data also suggest that the decision to divert is not racially based. For delinquent offenses, about 75% of African American children are petitioned to court compared with 71% of white children.

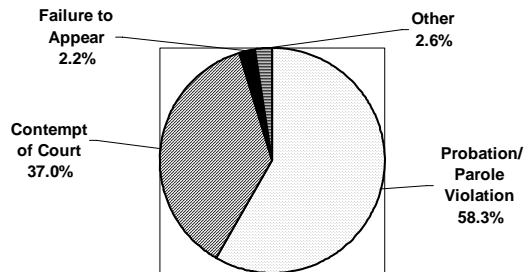
The percentage of intake cases petitioned, by gender, has changed less than 1% since 2000. Overall, a higher percentage of males than females are petitioned (76% vs. 66%) and, conversely, a higher percentage of females than males are diverted (26% vs. 19%). This is particularly apparent for larceny offenses which represent about 20% of delinquent cases. For larceny overall, 66% of cases are petitioned and 32% are diverted. Females are less likely to be petitioned than males (55% vs. 71%) and more likely to be diverted (42% vs. 26%). There is no apparent bias in other large offense categories such as assault, narcotics, vandalism, disorderly conduct, or burglary.

Because female numbers are low relative to males, comparison for offenses with fewer cases is problematic as a few cases can change the percentages dramatically.



## COURT SERVICE UNIT INTAKE -- TECHNICAL OFFENSES CASES

**Offense Distribution of Intake Cases with Technical Offenses, FY 2005**



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by Juvenile Services Section, DCJS

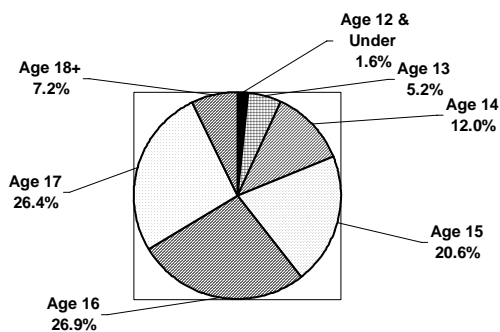
Approximately 10,000 children were brought to intake in 2005 where the most serious offense was a technical offense. These are termed technical offenses because the child has not committed a new offense. Most cases were for probation/parole violations (5,604) or contempt of court (3,553), as the pie chart shows. The percentages and

number are relatively unchanged since the 2004 and 2005 Plan Updates.

Most cases of technical violations are petitioned to court – in 2005, 92.4%. Less than 1% is diverted. Five percent of cases are handled in some way other than being petitioned or diverted, as noted in the introduction to the intake section.

### Demographics on Cases - Most Serious Offense is a Technical Offense

**Age Distribution of Intake Cases with Technical Violation Offenses, FY2005**



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by Juvenile Services, DCJS

#### **Age**

The age distribution of children brought to intake for technical offenses is shown in the pie chart. Almost 20% of them are 14 years of age or younger. This is somewhat less than for delinquent offenses, as might be expected. These children have already been to intake at least once.

The data indicate that age has little effect on the decision to petition cases where a technical offense is the most serious offense. There is some indication that children aged 11 and 12 are somewhat less likely to be petitioned than older children (88% vs. 91-92%), however 100% of the 14 children aged 10 and younger were petitioned to court.

Because only 66 cases were diverted, that age breakdown is not meaningful.

### Racial and Gender Composition

As with delinquent intake cases, African American juveniles are overrepresented relative to their proportions in the population. For technical offenses, 45% of cases were African American compared to 47% of delinquent intake cases. As with other intake cases, the data indicate that the decision to petition to court is not based on race. For status offenses, 52% of African American children were petitioned to court compared with 56% of white children.

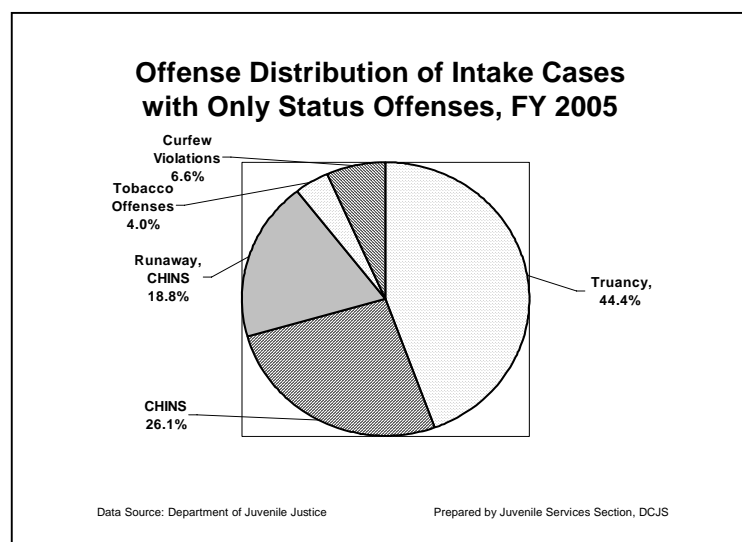
The percentage of females brought to intake for technical offenses (30%) is about the same as that for delinquent offenses (28%), but there is variability among the offenses. About 36-38% of contempt of court and failure to appear cases are female compared to 26% of probation/parole violations. These percentages for contempt of court and probation/parole violations are identical to those reported in the 2004 and 2005 Plan Updates. Data indicate that the decision to petition to court is not based on sex: for both sexes, almost all cases are petitioned to court.

Because there were so few diversions, examination of those data by race or sex is inappropriate.

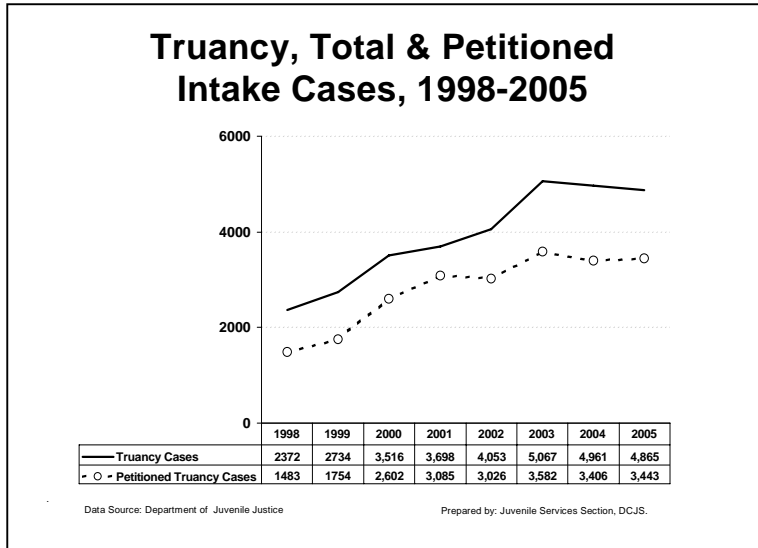
## COURT SERVICE UNIT INTAKE – CASES WITH ONLY STATUS OFFENSES

This section concerns cases involving only status complaints. Status cases have offenses such as purchase or possession of tobacco by a minor, children in need of services (CHINS), runaway complaints (also considered CHINS), and truancy (considered *Children in Need of Supervision*). Were the offender an adult, the complaints would not be offenses; hence it is the age status of the offender that determines that it is an offense.

As depicted in the chart at the beginning of this Section, the number of children petitioned to court for status offenses has been steady since 2000. In 2005, there were about 11,000 cases where the only offense was a status offense. Of those, 54% were petitioned to court and 42% were diverted. About 4% of cases were neither petitioned nor diverted.

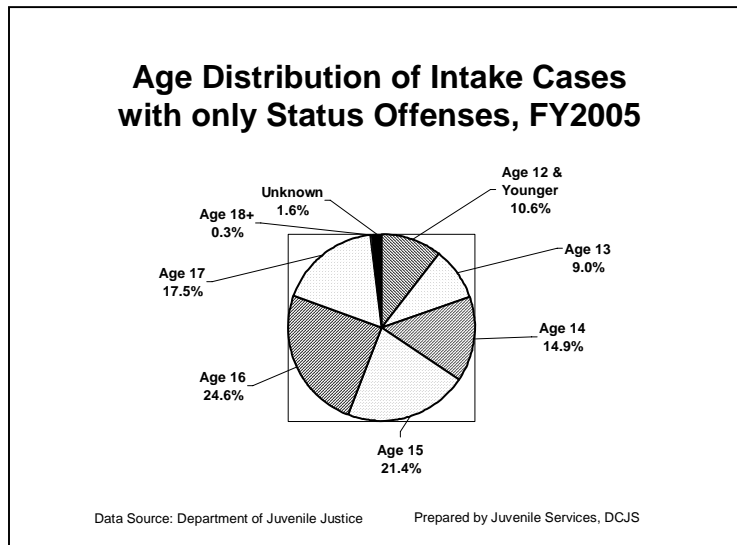


The number of children brought to intake and petitioned to court for truancy has increased dramatically since the change in the legislation in 1999<sup>2</sup>, as the graph shows. The number of cases has increased from 2,372 to 4,865 in 7 years, more than doubling. As in the last Three-Year Plan, a disparity exists between the percentage of total status offenses petitioned to court and the percentage of truants petitioned. Forty percent of cases with the other four status offenses were petitioned to court in FY2005 but 71% of truancy cases were petitioned.



In FY2005, about 20% of truants were aged 13 and under; of those, 4% (216) were aged 10 and under. Another 14% were aged 14. The majority -- about 56% -- were classified as white. Truancy is a priority for funding of Title II grants in 2007.

### **Demographics on Cases - Status Offenses Only**



### **Age**

As might be expected, children brought to intake for status offenses are younger than for delinquent or technical offenses. Cases of children aged 13 and under represent 20%; those aged 14 represent another 15%.

Children aged 11 and under are less likely to be petitioned to court than older children and more

<sup>2</sup> In 1999, the Code of Virginia was amended to require that each school go through a prescribed series of steps to handle truants. The final step is a petition to court. One consequence of the law was to eliminate the practice of punishing truants by expulsion. It also requires schools to attend to truants before their behavior becomes chronic.

likely to be diverted, although the difference has become smaller than last reported. In 2005, of children aged 11 and under, 48% were petitioned to court and 50% were diverted. Comparatively, of cases of children aged 14 to 18, 54% were petitioned to court and 42% were diverted.

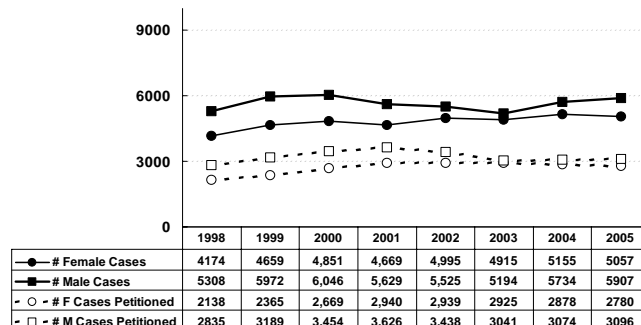
### Racial and Gender Composition: Intake Cases with Only Status Complaints

African American children continue to be overrepresented in cases with only status offenses, although they are less overrepresented than in delinquent or technical offense cases. In 2005, they represented 40% of status intake cases. This percentage has been essentially stable since 1998. The data indicate that there is no racial bias for the petitioning or diversion decisions. African American and white children are equally likely to be petitioned (56%W, 52%AA) and diverted (40%W, 43%AA).

The gender composition of intake cases involving only status complaints is shown in the chart.

As discussed in the 2003-2005 Three-Year Plan, there had been a shift in the gender distribution between 2000 and 2002 such that the gap between the numbers of males and females was narrowing. As the graph shows, until 2003, the number of females was increasing and the number of males decreasing. However, the gap appears to be widening with the number of females remaining relatively constant and the number of males increasing. We will continue to watch the numbers.

**Number of Intake Cases with Only Status Offenses by Gender, Total and Petitioned, 1998 - 2005**



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

Males and females are equally likely to be petitioned (52% M; 55% F) or diverted (42% M; 42%F).

## SUMMARY, INTAKE CASES

Delinquent cases, which represent about two-thirds of juvenile intake cases, show little change in number, number petitioned to court, or offense distribution over the past years. Assault, larceny, narcotics, and vandalism were four of the five largest offense categories (excluding technical offenses) in 1998 and are the largest offense categories in 2005. Young juvenile offenders continue to represent a disproportionate percentage of children brought to intake for arson and sex offenses.

The other one-third of intake cases is for technical violation offenses (1/6) and cases where the only offense is a status offense (1/6). All but 5% of technical offense cases are for probation/parole violations or contempt of court. Most status offense cases are for children brought to intake for truancy, running away, or as children in need of services. Truancy constitutes the largest portion of status offense cases – 44% in 2005. Truancy is a funding priority for Title II for 2007.

Data are also reported on the percentages of cases petitioned to court or diverted. For all 63,000 intake cases, about 73% were petitioned, 22% diverted, and 5% handled in other ways. For delinquent cases, 73% were petitioned and 22% diverted. Status offense cases are less likely to be petitioned -- 54% were petitioned and 42% diverted. Almost all technical violation offense cases are petitioned -- 92% were petitioned and less than 1% were diverted.

For status and delinquent offenses, very young children are less likely to be petitioned and more likely to be diverted. For delinquent offenses, this applies to children aged 12 and under and for status offenses, for children aged 11 and under. Most (93%) children brought to intake for technical violations are petitioned to court. Age has little, if any, effect on that decision.

Minority overrepresentation is a priority for Title II funding for 2007 as it was for 2006 and 2005. African American children are overrepresented at intake relative to their proportions in the population. The Relative Rate Index for court intake for African Americans for 2005 is 2.6. This means that African American children are 2.6 times as likely to be brought to intake as white children when their relative representation in the juvenile population is controlled statistically. Relative Rate Indices are discussed and displayed graphically in the *Plan for Compliance with the Disproportionate Minority Contact Core Requirement Section* of this Three-Year Plan.

However, the data indicate that there is no racial bias in the decision to petition or divert. Overall, 72% of white children are petitioned to court compared to 74% of African American children. Of white children, 23% are diverted compared to 21% of African American children. There is some variability among the offense categories. For status and technical violation (TV) offenders, a slightly higher percentage of white than African American children are petitioned to court (56 vs. 52% for status; 94 vs. 90% for TV); for delinquent offenders, a slightly higher percentage of African American than white children are petitioned to court (75 vs. 71%). This is confirmed by the Relative Rate Indices for petitioned and diverted minority youth which hover around 1.0, which is the comparative value for white youth.

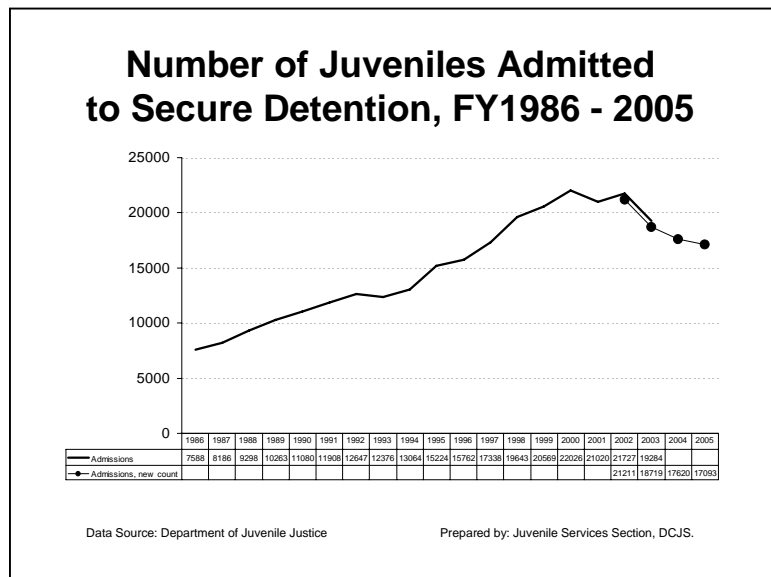
The majority of children in the system are males - in FY 2005, 69%. For delinquent offenses, females are less likely to be petitioned to court and more likely to be diverted. For cases of technical violations and where the only offense is a status offense, there appears to be no bias based on sex in the decision to petition.

### 3: Secure Detention

Secure detention facilities provide confinement for juveniles who are awaiting adjudication, disposition, or placement (pre-dispositional), and local confinement services for adjudicated youth (post-dispositional). In 2005, 77% of admissions to secure detention facilities were predispositional<sup>3</sup>. Predispositional admissions have represented 75% to 80% of admissions since 2000.

Post-dispositional sentencing may be for up to six months. Juveniles may also be placed in secure detention by a judge for a specified number of days for technical offenses such as probation/parole violations, failure to appear at trial, or contempt of court.

Information on average daily population, admissions, and population demographics for juvenile secure detention facilities is presented in this section. A child may have more than one detention admission during a detention placement by being placed in a facility and transferred in and out of that facility, to another facility, or transferred to and from court. This makes counting problematic. Moreover, in 2004, the Department of Juvenile Justice changed the method of counting admissions such that weekender admissions (juveniles sentenced to serve a number of weekends in detention) were counted only once in 2004. They also recomputed the number of juveniles for 2002 and 2003. Those recomputations indicate a relatively small difference of 500-600 admissions per year or about 2-3%.



The number of juveniles admitted to secure detention for the 20-year period 1986 to 2005 is shown in the graph. We have retained it because of the temporal information it provides; however, because of the change in counting method the 2004 and 2005 data points are shown separately. Data points for both counting methods are shown for 2002 and 2003.

The 17,093 admissions in 2005 represent 10,532 juveniles. As in 2003 and 2004, about two-thirds were admitted only one time and the others were admitted multiple times.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (2006). *Data resource guide, Fiscal year 2005*, Richmond, VA.

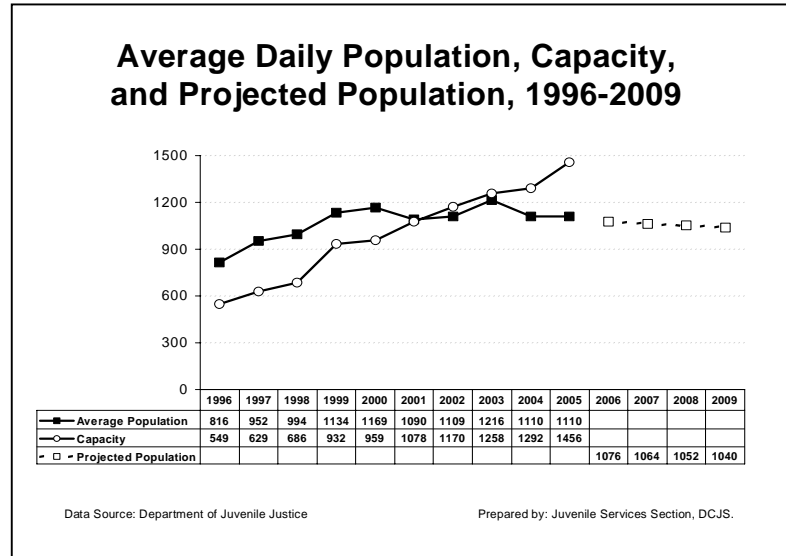
As the graph shows, the number of admissions to secure detention facilities has decreased by 19% since 2002.

Reducing the number of children admitted to secure detention facilities is a funding priority for Title II grant funding in 2007 as it was for 2006 and 2005.

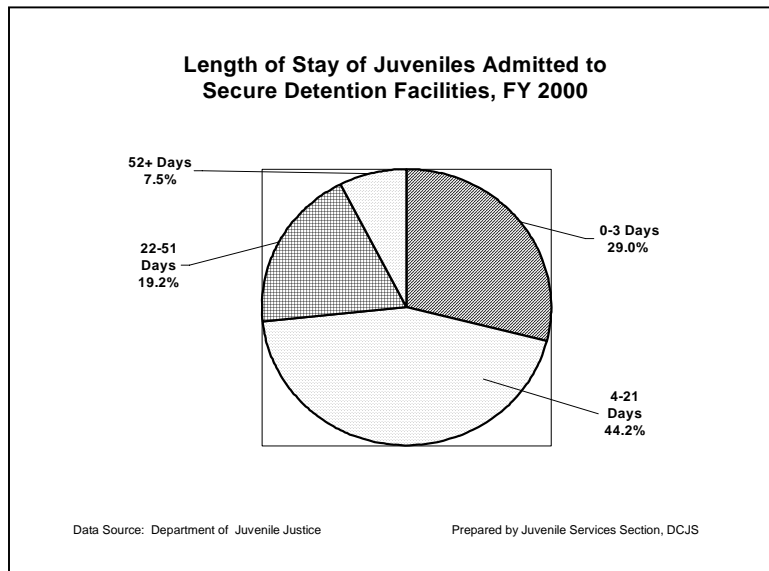
## AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION, CAPACITY, AND PROJECTED POPULATION

The chart shows the average daily population, capacity, and projected population of secure detention facilities.

In the 5-year period, 1996-2001, the average daily population of secure detention facilities increased by about one-third; except for a one-year increase in 2003, there has been little change since.



## LENGTH OF STAY



Most juveniles are detained in secure detention facilities for less than three weeks. The average length of stay is depicted below. The data were taken from a 2001 report by the Department of Juvenile Justice<sup>4</sup>. Intervals shown are consistent with statutes in the *Code of Virginia*.

Once detained, juveniles must appear before a

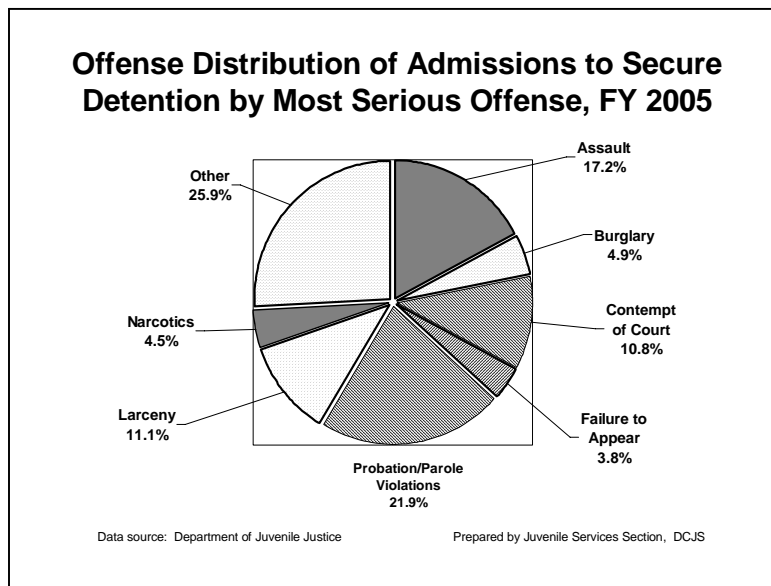
<sup>4</sup> Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (2001). *Juvenile detention: What's going on in Virginia: Utilization of pre-dispositional juvenile detention in Virginia, Fiscal year 2000*. Richmond, VA

judge on the next day on which the court sits, not to exceed 72 hours (3 days). The length of stay is typically determined by the judge; however, a juvenile must be released from secure detention if there is no adjudicatory or transfer hearing within 21 days from the initial date of detention. However, the court may extend the time limitation for a reasonable period of time for good cause provided that the basis of the extension is recorded and filed with the proceedings<sup>5</sup>

As the pie chart shows, 29% of admissions are for three days or less; another 44% are for 4 days to 21 days, 19% are for 21 days to 51 days (about 7 ½ weeks) and the remaining 8% are for more than 52 days.

## ADMISSIONS FOR SPECIFIC OFFENSES: SECURE DETENTION

Relatively few offenses account for the majority of the 17,093 admissions in 2005



and they are about the same percentages as reported in the last Three-Year Plan and Updates.

Seven offenses, which account for 3/4 of admissions, are depicted in the pie chart. The largest category was technical violations, shown by the cross-hatched pattern in the chart. Together, the three technical violations -- probation/parole violations, contempt of court, and failure to appear -- account for

36% of admissions. These are admissions for which the child has not committed a new offense. This is not a new trend. Technical offenses were the largest category of admissions in the two previous Three-Year Plans.

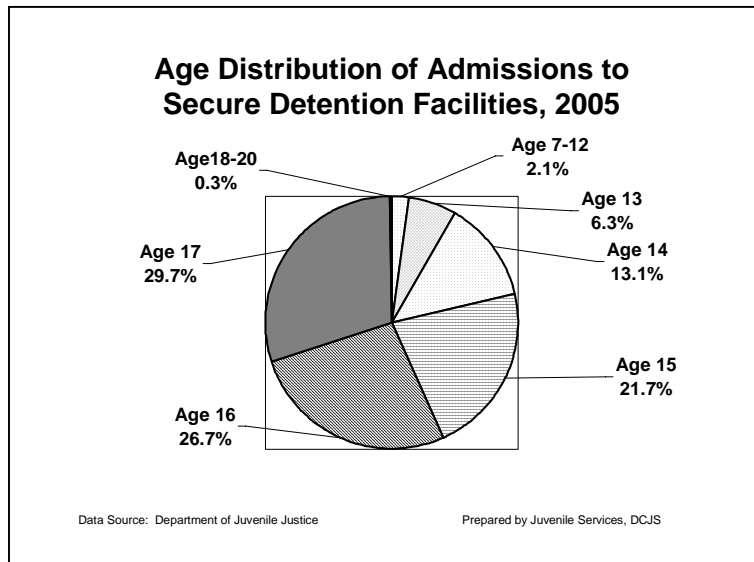
The other major categories are assault, 17%, larceny, 12%, narcotics, 5%, and burglary, 5%. Together, they account for another 39% of the pie chart.

<sup>5</sup> Code of Virginia, §16.1-277.1 D.



## AGE DISTRIBUTION: SECURE DETENTION FACILITIES

The following pie chart shows the age distribution of those admitted to secure detention facilities in Virginia in 2005<sup>6</sup>. The percentages displayed have changed little since the submission of the last Three-Year Plan.



The top right quadrant represents children who are aged 14 and under. Twenty-two percent of admissions to secure detention facilities were of children aged 14 and younger in 2005. This represents, 24 admissions of children aged 7-10, 70 aged 11, 267 aged 12, 1,078 aged 13, and 2,238 aged 14.

This is an ongoing pattern -- children aged 14 and under have represented

between 22 and 25% of admissions to secure detention facilities since 1998.

## RACIAL AND GENDER COMPOSITION: SECURE DETENTION FACILITIES

Both African American and white children show a decrease in the number of admissions from 2000 to 2005. In contrast, the number of admissions of Hispanic children has increased by about 22% from 2000. Percentile information is depicted in the graph below.

As at intake, African American children are over-represented in secure detention facilities in Virginia. They represent 24% of the population aged 10-17 but 51% of admissions. The situation is unchanged over the past nine years. Children classified as white are 66% of the at-risk population and 40% of admissions.

<sup>6</sup> Data for admissions of unknown age were omitted. They total 19 admissions.

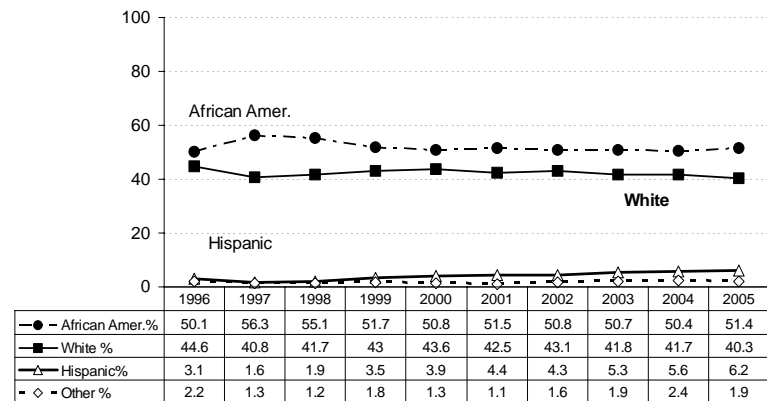
Together, admissions of African American and white children account for about 92% of admissions.

The percentage of admissions of Hispanic children has doubled since 1996 from 3.1% to 6.2% in 2005. Whether this represents a true increase or inaccurate classification in the earlier years cannot be determined from the data.

### **Gender Distribution**

In 2004 and 2005, there was a decrease in the number of male and female admissions, some of which will be due to the changes in the counting method. The percentages of male and female admissions are unchanged since 2002. In 2005, they were 76% male and 24% female.

### **Percentage of Juveniles Admitted to Secure Detention by Race, FY1996 - 2005**



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

## **SUMMARY: SECURE DETENTION FACILITIES**

We have 20 years of admissions data for detention facilities. Although the number of admissions has decreased since 2000, overall the number has almost doubled over the past 20 years, even given the change in counting method. Since 2000, 75% to 80% of admissions have been predispositional.

The largest offense category for which children are detained is technical violations: they account for 36% of admissions. This is not a new trend. Technical violation offenses were the largest offense category in the last two Three-Year Plans.

Twenty-two percent of children admitted to secure detention facilities in 2005 were aged 14 and under. This is an ongoing pattern -- children aged 14 and under have represented more than 20% of admissions to secure detention facilities since 1998.

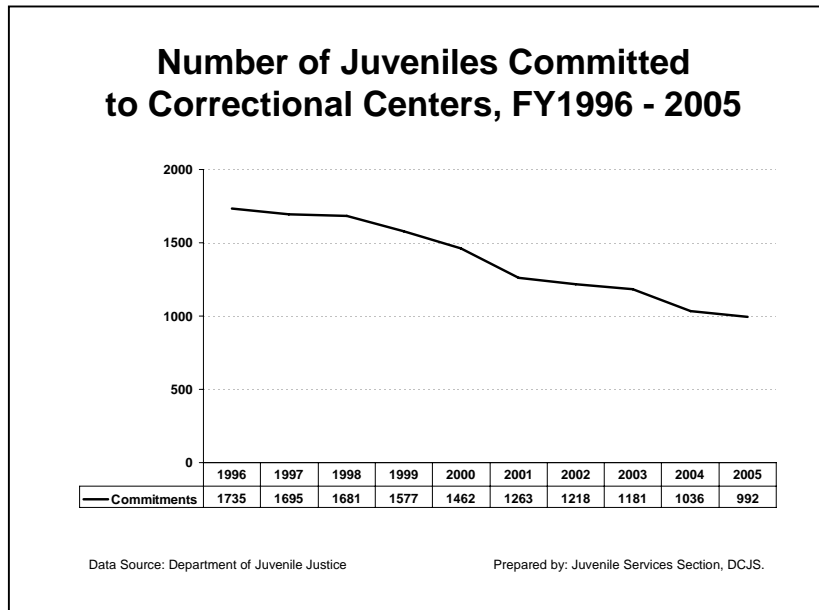
As at intake, African American children are over-represented in secure detention facilities in Virginia. They represent 24% of the population aged 10-17 but about 50% of admissions. The situation is unchanged since 1999.

## 4: Juvenile Correctional Centers

If a child is adjudicated as a delinquent and is 11 years of age or older, one of the possible sanctions is custodial commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice. State care includes an initial assessment at the Reception and Diagnostic Center. From the Reception and Diagnostic Center, the child may go to a privately operated residential facility or a Juvenile Correctional Center. The Community Placement Program is a pilot program operating in the Tidewater and Shenandoah secure detention facilities which places juveniles committed to the State in local detention facilities rather than correctional centers. The detention facilities are typically closer to the youth's homes.

This section contains data on commitments, average daily population, admitting offenses, and population demographics for juveniles committed to correctional centers.

The cost of detaining a juvenile in a correctional facility is high. In 2005, the annual per capita cost was \$88,271 comprised of \$70,463 JCC annual cost and \$17,808 educational costs<sup>7</sup>.



Recidivism rates are also high. The re-arrest rate for juveniles released from correctional centers is 78% after three years and reconviction rates are 68%<sup>8</sup>. Reducing recidivism of juveniles released from JCCs is a priority for Title II grant funding for 2007.

There are seven juvenile correctional centers in Virginia including the Reception and Diagnostic Center.

The number of juveniles committed to juvenile correctional centers is shown in the chart. The total number of commitments has decreased by almost 50% over the 10-year period from 1,735 in 1996 to 992 in 2005.

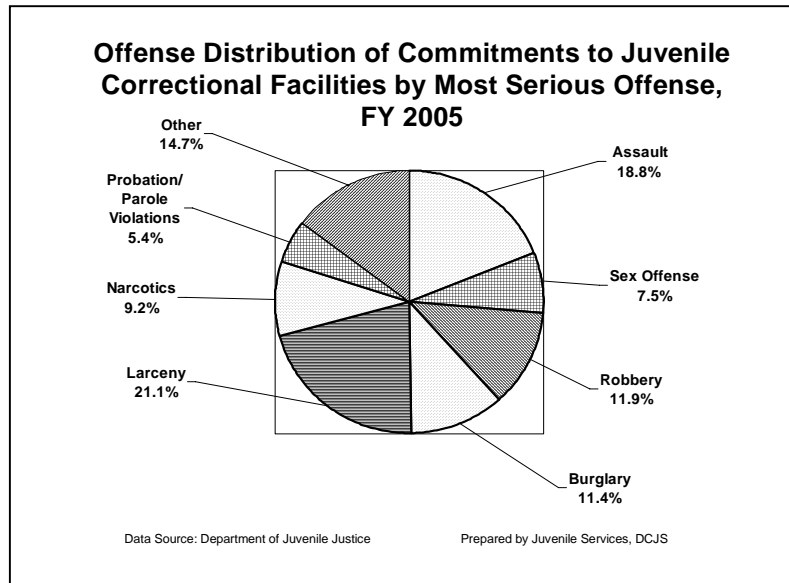
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7, 8. Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (2006). *Data resource guide, Fiscal year 2005*, Richmond, VA

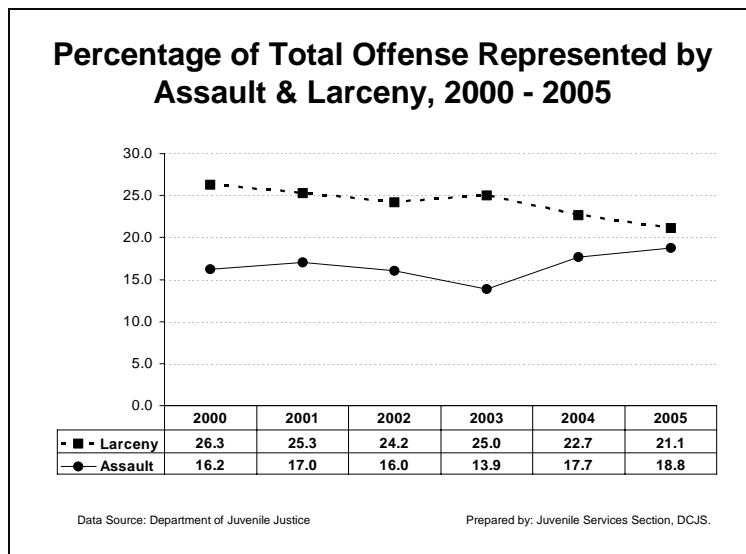
## OFFENSES

Relatively few offenses contribute a large portion of committing offenses. These are depicted in the chart.

Although the most frequent offenses resulting in commitment have remained the same, there has been a change in the proportions that some of those seven offenses represent since 2000.



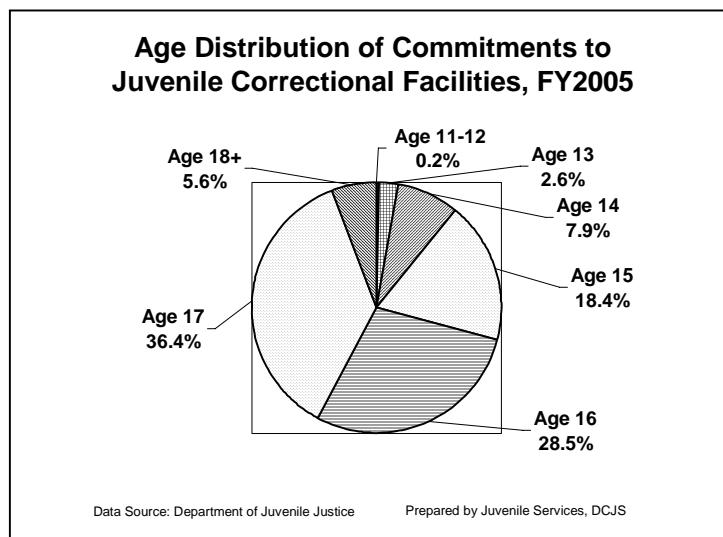
The data for assault and larceny are shown in the next chart. Together, they represent about 40% of most-serious committing offenses, as they did in 2000. Commitments for larceny, shown on the top line, have decreased from 26% to 21% of commitments. This represents a numeric decrease of 166 children.



The percentage of commitments for assault has increased from 16% to 19% of commitments, shown on the bottom line. Because the overall number of children being committed has decreased, this increase in the percentage of cases represented by assault actually represents a numeric decrease of 45 children.

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

The pie chart presents the age distribution of persons committed to juvenile correctional centers in 2005.



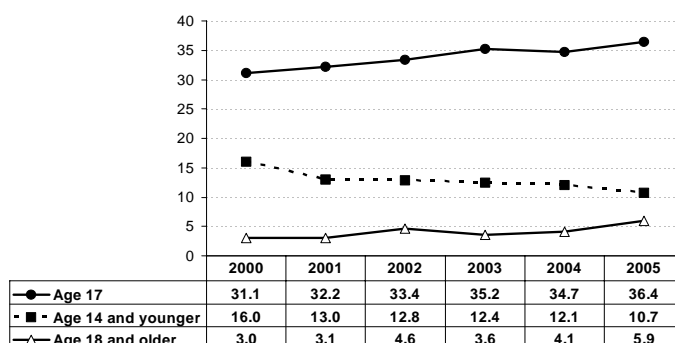
Of the 992 commitments in 2005, the youngest were aged 11 and 12. These two children were both committed for robbery.

Overall, 96 children aged 14 and younger were committed to juvenile correctional centers in 2005. Of those 96, 13 (13.5%) were committed for sex offenses. Compared to the 7.5% of the total

commitments represented by sex offenses, young children represent a disproportionate portion of those committed for sex offenses.

Individuals being committed to juvenile correctional centers have gotten older over the past five years. The chart depicts the age distribution of commitments for the six-year period. As those aged 15 and 16 are relatively unchanged, they are not shown. Those aged 17 and aged 18 and older – depicted in the top and bottom lines – have both increased. In 2000, together they represented 34%; in 2005, they represented 42%. Those aged 14 and younger have declined from 16% to 11% of the total.

### Changes in Age Distribution FY 2000 - 2005



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

## RACIAL AND GENDER COMPOSITION: CORRECTIONAL CENTERS

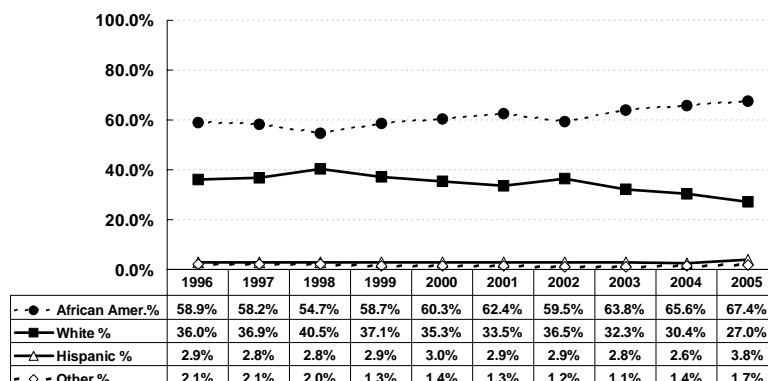
### Racial Composition

As reported in the 2003-2005 Three-Year Plan, the numbers of African American and white children in juvenile correctional centers decreased at about the same rate until about 2002. However, the decrease from 2002 to 2005 is faster for white children than for African American children. From 2002 to 2005, the number of white children committed decreased by 163 whereas the number of African American children decreased by only 36.

The graph provides an overview of the relative proportions of individuals of the three main racial categories and other minorities.

As the graph shows, African American children represent 67% of commitments to juvenile correctional centers, an increase from 59% ten years ago. The percentage of white children has decreased from 36% to 27% since 1996. The gap is widening.

**Percentage of Juveniles Committed to Juvenile Correctional Facilities by Race, FY 1996 - 2005**



Data Source: Department of Juvenile Justice  
The 'Other' category includes Asian/PI,  
American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Other

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

### Gender Distribution

The gender distribution of admissions to correctional centers varies somewhat from year to year but has changed little over the ten-year period 1996 to 2005. Close to 90% are males; about 9 -12% are females.

## SUMMARY, JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL CENTERS

The number of commitments to juvenile correctional facilities has continued to decrease. Compared to ten years ago, over 700 fewer children were committed in FY2005.

Commitments to juvenile correctional facilities are typically of African American males. About 38% of the most serious offenses are offenses against persons such as assault, sexual assault, and robbery. Burglary and larceny represent another 33%. Narcotics and probation/parole violations are the other largest categories.

As would be expected, the age distribution of juveniles committed to correctional facilities reflects older children than those brought to intake or confined in secure detention facilities. The age differential has increased such that commitments are of older children than five years ago.

As at intake and in secure detention facilities, African American children are over-represented relative to their proportion in the juvenile population. The Relative Rate Index for African American juveniles at the correctional center confinement stage has increased from 2003 to 2005. This is discussed in the *Plan for Compliance with the Disproportionate Minority Contact Core Requirement Section* of this Three-Year Plan. Plotting of the data over a 10-year period indicates that the spread is widening rather than narrowing.

## **5. OTHER SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL CONDITIONS RELEVANT TO DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMMING**

In this section, we review data relevant to the variable social, economic, and legal conditions in Virginia. Data are available as well as perceptions from the field that were collected as part of Virginia's prioritization process.

### **PERCEPTIONS FROM THE FIELD**

As part of the process of determining priorities for grant funding for FY2007, juvenile justice constituent groups were asked to respond to six questions. Responses to two of the questions contain information relevant to this topic. One question was "To what one area should we put prevention money" (discussed below as the prevention question). Another was, "What are the three most important juvenile crime problems in Virginia today" (discussed below as the crime question).

Responses to the prevention question centered around three main issues. The most frequently mentioned was the need for early and familial intervention. School issues, including truancy and enhancement of school attachment were also cited as was assessment of or services for mental health/substance abuse.

Some of those same issues were raised in response to the crime question. Causal factors of juvenile crime problems were described. These included such responses as, "addressing the root cause of juvenile problems", "parenting issues", "insufficient resources for children/adolescents at risk", and "community response to issues presenting barriers to attendance". Victimization, in the family and of children in the family was raised. Substance abuse/mental health issues were also raised including the need for early intervention. Throughout these responses is the underlying concept of risk factors within the family and the need to address the whole family to change the behavior of the child.

Anecdotal information indicates that prevention programs may be more difficult because they are voluntary. A child with many risk factors and few protective factors cannot be ordered into a prevention program. His or her family must choose to participate.

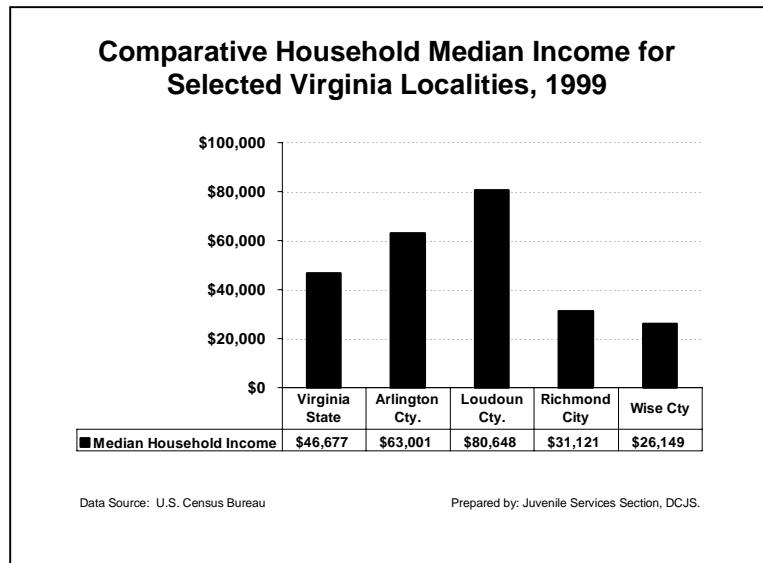
### **SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS**

Presented below are data from the State and four localities that are representative of the diverse social and economic conditions in Virginia. The four localities are Arlington County, Loudoun County, the City of Richmond, and Wise County. Arlington County has a relatively high economic status, but it is racially diverse with about 25% Hispanic juvenile population and 10% each African American and Asian juvenile populations. Loudoun County is predominantly white and has the highest economic status of these four. The City of Richmond is predominantly African American and economically disadvantaged. Wise

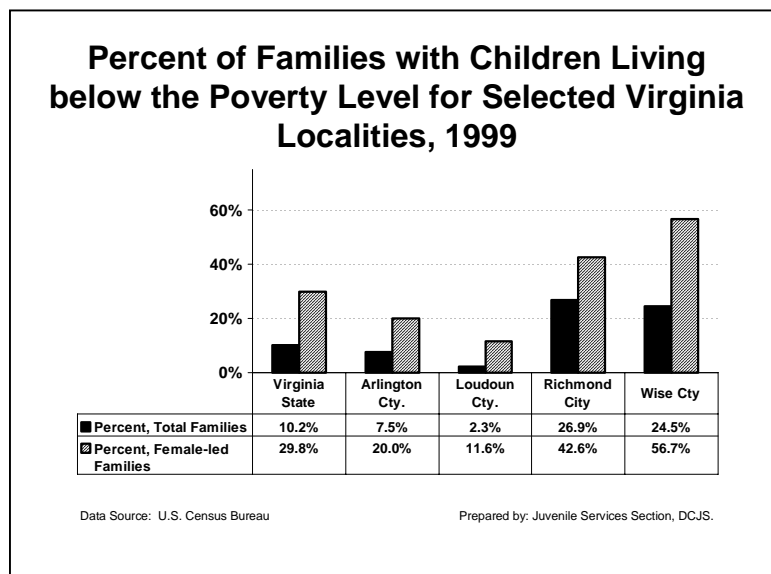


County is rural, small, economically disadvantaged, and predominantly white. Arlington County, Loudoun County, and the City of Richmond, have juvenile populations (aged 0-17) in the 30,000 to 70,000 range. Wise County has only 9,000.

The graph shows comparative household median income for the State and these four localities. As the graph shows, the median household income for the City of Richmond and Wise County is less than half that of Arlington and Loudoun County. Because the tax base is so much lower, many fewer resources are available in these localities.



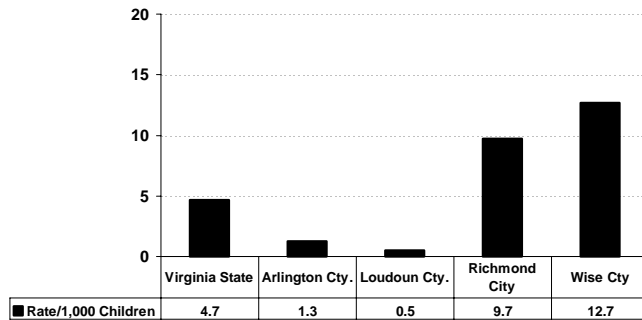
This has implications for children. The following chart displays – for these same localities – the percentage of families with children living below the poverty level.



As can be seen, the percentages are much higher for some localities than others, particularly for families that are led by women, shown in the variegated bars. In Richmond City, 43% of female-led families live below the poverty line; it is 67% in rural Wise County. The solid bars show the

percent of total families with children living below the poverty line.

### Founded Child Abuse Rate per 1,000 Children for Selected Virginia Localities, 2002



Data Source: Virginia Department of Social Services web site.

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

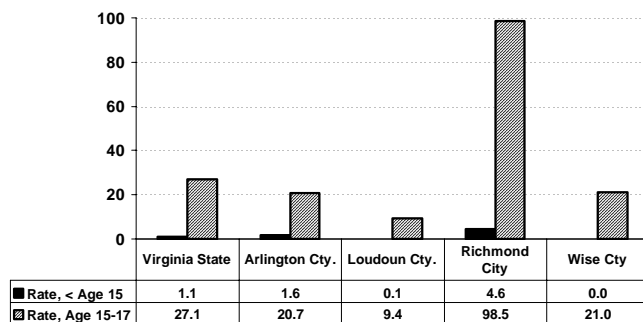
These same localities have indicators that there are parents in the communities who demonstrate antisocial behaviors.

The graph shows the founded child abuse rate for the State and four localities. The rates for Richmond City and Wise County are 5 to 20 times higher than Arlington County or Loudoun County.

The teen pregnancy rate is another useful indicator. Maternal competence is one of the protective factors for children who are otherwise at high risk for delinquency.

The information shown in the graph illustrates the differences among localities in Virginia. The variegated bars show the rate per 1,000 female population for girls aged 16-17. Notice that in the City of Richmond, the rate is nearly 1 in 10. The solid bars show the pregnancy rate for female children younger than aged 16.

### Teen Pregnancy Rate per 1,000 Population for Selected Virginia Localities, 2003



Data Source: Virginia Department of Health web site

Prepared by: Juvenile Services Section, DCJS.

## LEGAL INDICATORS

In Virginia, legal problems are most evident when children come into contact with the juvenile justice system. This problem has been identified, legislative changes have occurred, and it is a priority for grant funding. The legal

representation of children is discussed in detail in the Problem Statements and Program Plans.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS OF RURAL LOCALITIES**

Access to services for juveniles who have had contact with the juvenile justice system is inconsistent across the state. With few exceptions, rural areas have fewer services available to the people in their communities. The tax base is usually lower. The data for Wise County, shown above, exemplify the problems. This is particularly true for accessing specialized services for subgroups of youth. The lack of available services includes access to quality legal representation, including public defender services, and lack of diversion programs. Transportation to programs, at all points in the juvenile justice system, is also an issue in rural areas.